

ADDING CERTAIN LANDS TO SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST, CALIF.

MAY 25, 1942.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. HATCH, from the Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 4975]

The Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 4975) to add certain lands to the Sequoia National Forest, Calif., having considered the same report favorably thereon with the following amendment and with the recommendation that the bill, as amended, do pass.

On page 1, strike out lines 3 to 6, inclusive, and insert in lieu thereof the following:

That subject to existing valid claims, the boundaries of the Sequoia National Forest, California, be, and they are hereby extended to include the following described lands, which shall hereafter be subject to the laws, rules, and regulations relating to said national forest:

Facts concerning this proposed measure are set forth in the letter of the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture to the chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, which letter is hereinbelow set forth in full and made a part of this report, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, November 21, 1941.

Hon. ALVA B. ADAMS,
Chairman, Committee on Public Lands and Surveys,
United States Senate.

DEAR SENATOR ADAMS: This Department has received from the chairman of the House Committee on Public Lands a request for a report on H. R. 4975, a bill to add certain lands to the Sequoia National Forest, Calif. Since the bill passed the House on August 4 and is now pending before your committee, we wish to submit our recommendations to your committee.

The bill is similar to H. R. 1790 of the Seventy-sixth Congress, which was favorably reported by the House Committee on Public Lands and passed the House of Representatives on April 1, 1940. The area described in the former bill and in the one now pending before your committee is the same. If this area were included within the boundaries of the Sequoia National Forest, the privately owned lands would become subject to the provisions of the General Exchange

Act of March 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 465) and could be acquired, over a period of years, in exchange for national forest lands or timber, when such exchanges are found to be in the public interest.

The described lands were excluded from the Tule Indian Reservation by the act of May 17, 1928 (45 Stat. 600), and now comprise an isolated island surrounded by the Indian reservation on one side and the national forest on the other. Included within this area are approximately 440 acres which were reconveyed to the United States in exchange for timber pursuant to the act of March 20, 1922, and are now administered by the Forest Service of this Department. The bill properly, in our judgment, includes all of the lands, formerly in private ownership, which were eliminated from the Indian reservation by the act of May 17, 1928. The privately owned lands are of such character and so situated that their inclusion within the national-forest boundaries is logical, for they are chiefly valuable for forest purposes and contain some valuable big-tree groves. The preservation of the big-tree groves can be assured through their acquisition in exchange for national-forest land or timber.

Both of the public reservations which surround the lands described in the bill require careful protection from fire and trespass. When the described lands were within the boundaries of the Tule Indian Reservation they were within the scope of an established protective organization; but their elimination from the Indian reservation left them outside of the defined fields of Indian Service and Forest Service action. The area of privately owned land is too small to support an independent and effective program of protection. Consequently it constitutes a hazard to the adjoining publicly managed lands. Inclusion of the lands within the national forest would better enable the Forest Service to take such measures as might be necessary to control fires or trespass originating upon the lands, either in cooperation with the owners thereof or through acquisition for national-forest purposes. The proposed change would not increase the costs of national-forest administration.

The Department of the Interior has recommended that the bill be amended as follows: On page 1, delete lines 3 to 6, inclusive, and insert: "That, subject to existing valid claims, the boundaries of the Sequoia National Forest, California, be, and they are hereby, extended to include the following described lands, which shall hereafter be subject to the laws, rules, and regulations relating to said national forest."

This Department recommends the proposed clarifying amendment and passage of the bill.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that, if amended as recommended above, the enactment of the proposed legislation would not be in conflict with the program of the President.

Sincerely,

GROVER B. HILL, *Assistant Secretary.*

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